BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Violet Hew Zane, 71, former store and restaurant employee, Lower Paia

"See, my father would make out the order, mail it to the stores, and they sent the groceries by freighters--by steamers. In the early days, during the horse and wagon days, there was a depot over there. The train brought the crates from Kahului Pier straight up to Paia Depot. Then my father would pick up the freight at Paia Depot and bring the goods home....Brought in plenty boxes of food because there were so many Chinese. So, he had to supply their demand."

Violet Hew Zane, Chinese, was born January 24, 1909, in Lower Paia, Maui. Her father, Hew Fat, owned Hew Fat Kee, a store and restaurant in Lower Paia which still operates today. It is the lone surviving Chinese-run business in an area where Chinese businesses were plentiful prior to 1930. The second oldest of nine children, Zane began working in the store at a very young age. She also helped take care of her younger brothers and sisters.

In 1927, Zane left Lower Paia to attend the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, returning during her summer vacations to help in the store. In 1931, she married Ernest Zane and lived in Canton, China between 1934 and 1936. In 1936, she returned to Lower Paia and subsequently became a teacher.

Three years later, she again left Maui to attend the UH, where she received a Master's Degree in 1941. From 1941 until her retirement in 1971, she was an elementary schoolteacher.

Despite her teaching career, Zane has always found time to help in the store currently run by her sister-in-law. Her knowledge of the store and of Lower Paia is extensive. Today, she still lives behind the store and helps during the busy hours.

Tape No. 7-43-1-80 and 7-44-1-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Violet Hew Zane (VZ)

March 1, 1980

Lower Paia, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mrs. Violet Hew Zane. Today is March 1, 1980, and we're at her home in Lower Paia, Maui.

Okay, Mrs. Zane, where were you born?

VZ: In Paia--Lower Paia. January 24, 1909. It was a Sunday.

WN: How do you know it was a Sunday?

VZ: My mother told me. But if you trace back in the almanac, January 24 is on a Sunday. One year, in 1925, everyone in the family had birth certificates made because we didn't have Hawaiian birth certificates. So we had to have American birth certificates. From my father's notebook, we got all the birthdates. Well, at the vital statistics office, they found my birth certificate, and several others of my brothers and sisters. So, mine is an accurate one. (Laughs)

WN: According to the Chinese calendar--you know, the animal zodiac year--what year were you born?

VZ: (I was born in the year of the cock.) Yeah, the lunar calendar. But my father didn't use the lunar calendar in recording our births. He used the American calendar. But my oldest sister--and my mother always remembered this way--it's on the full moon, 8 o'clock at night. The moon was coming up beautifully, and she was born just at that time--8 o'clock, 1906. October 1, 1906. And it was a Saturday. So, my mother goes by the lunar calendar, but my father used the American--Gregorian calendar, they call it, yeah?

WN: Where are your father and mother from?

VZ: From China. My father was born and raised in Pukut village, a village about halfway between Hong Kong and Canton. My mother was born in the village of Hachoong. That was also about halfway between Canton and Hong Kong.

WN: Did they tell any stories about what it was like for them when they were living in China?

VZ: Well, my mother says [her] father--as far as she remembered, she said--always worked for the British liner. He was a cook on the British liner, so he seldom came home. But when he did, he always scrubbed his house clean. The house is made of stone bricks, and houses like that would last hundreds and hundreds of years. It was scrubbed and cleaned. You know, there's not only one building--[there were] several buildings--because Chinese, in taking care of their boys and girls, morally, they were very strict. So, brothers and sisters were separated at the age of seven. The girls had to sleep in one house and the boys in another house.

WN: You mean, brothers and sisters?

VZ: Uh huh [yes]. That's their custom, because they're very strict, you know.

WN: They lived in a stone house? Was that common?

VZ: Yeah, in a stone house. Very common in my father's village and my mother's village because they were well-off farm owners. They cultivated their own rice and had their own buffalo to plow their fields. They had running water. They owned land from the mountains straight down to the valley. So, they got the water from the mountainside straight down to the valley where they cultivated their rice. Then, up along the mountain slopes, they would plant different fruit trees, like pears and apples and things like that, and persimmons. Then, down where the rice fields were, they would plant different kinds of vegetables. They would plant ginger with the bitter melon. They loved bitter melon. They raised water chestnuts in the rice ponds.

They planted the rice by hand, spraying the seeds in the water after they plowed the land with the buffaloes. When it's time to harvest, they let the water out and let it dry. They'd pull the rice plant out, and they would hit the grains into a big basket. They took the grain home. They'd pound out the shells--the husks--using the old-fashioned way of pounding it. They had a big bowl and a long stick about, I'd say about four feet long with a hammerlike head in the front--you know, over the (stone) bowl. A person would stand on--like a seesaw--stand on the board at the end. They would step on it, and the board would come up. When they let go, the round hammer would hit the rice in the big stone bowl. That's how they separated the husk from the rice. That's the old-fashioned way of doing things. But it was fun watching those people go up and down. (Laughs) At first, I thought they were dancing, but no. (Laughs)

WN: When you say you saw them, when did you see them do that?

VZ: Oh, when I was there in 1934. See, I went to visit my father's

family and my husband's family.

WN: They told you that that's how they did it long before, too?

VZ: Yeah. But my grandma was ninety-five, then, when I got there. She used my Chinese name. Say, "You Kyau, why doesn't your father come home? Because I'm getting old. I'm going to die soon. But it's nice of you to come now, so you get to see all your cousins and your uncles and other relatives."

But one thing she asked for. "Did you bring plenty money home for your cousins?" (Laughs)

She was healthy--good vision and hearing and everything. The first day I went to visit her, I had a yellow dress on. Then the next time I visited her, I had a white dress on. She said, "Did you wear a yellow dress the last time when you came?" You know. She did remember all those things. And then, too, she knew me right away from the pictures that my father had sent to her.

My father, in 1916, had visited his folks, well, just to visit them because his father had just returned from Australia. His father was a lawyer in Australia for forty years. He had just returned, so my father went back to see his father. When he came back, he said, oh, his father spoke perfect English. He couldn't keep up with his father. Then, in 1928, he went again to visit his folks to celebrate his father's ninety-second birthday. So, there was a big party for the family there.

We all went to visit China in 1925. The purpose was to see our relatives in China, especially my grandfather and grandmother. But we couldn't get to Hong Kong from Shanghai because there was a big strike in Hong Kong. I think it was a stevedore strike. They said it was dangerous for us to go to Hong Kong. So, we remained eighteen days in Shanghai, and we stayed with relatives there in Shanghai and at the hotel, too. We stayed at the hotel part of the time and with relatives part of the time. After eighteen days--after waiting that long--we found out we couldn't go [to Hong Kong]. The strike was still on, so we returned to Hawaii.

WN: You said that your father's parents were quite wealthy farmers?

VZ: They had a large farm.

WN: Did they sell a lot of the rice that they raised?

VZ: Oh, they sold plenty of rice. They cultivated plenty. Every time they harvested, they had plenty. And the fruits, too. Lots of fruits. Not only pears and apples and persimmons. They also had guavas. Plenty of that. And tangerines. And oranges. So, they were self-sufficient.

Some of the relatives had gone on to (seek their fortunes) in New

Zealand, Australia--places like that--New Guinea. There was one, a cousin of my father who was a lumberjack in New Guinea. I met him at my father's house one day. He talked to me and gave me a picture of himself. At that time, he was about sixty-five, a big, strapping man. My grandfather was a tall man. He was six feet, six [inches] in height. But my grandmother was short, just like me. (Laughs)

WN: This is on your father's side?

VZ: On my father's side. Uh huh [yes].

WN: Now, your mother's side family, were they pretty wealthy, too?

VZ: They're well-off. They always had plenty of money because the father worked for the British liner. Then, the mother cultivated the fields. They had plenty of land. They raised lots of crops. They had more than enough to eat and had a good home. They built beautiful homes--strong homes that would last hundreds and hundreds of years.

WN: So, if they were wealthy people, do you know why they came to Hawaii?

VZ: My father had a foster sister [who] was married to the owner of a restaurant here in Lower Paia. She was the second wife to him [restaurant owner] because the first wife didn't want to come back to Hawaii. She said, "Hard work in Hawaii." (Chuckles) So, he married a second woman, who was related to my father. She was a Hew girl. But her parents have already died. She was an orphan, so my grandmother adopted her. She was my father's foster sister. So, she told him to come to Hawaii with her since my father had a Chinese education. He was a bookkeeper. I mean, he could take care of Chinese books. So, he came to be their bookkeeper. He was never a laborer.

WN: What was the name of this store [restaurant]?

VZ: Fung Pao.

WN: It seems like your father was going to come here intending to make money?

VZ: Yeah, well, it's easier to make money here. Because in China, they raised plenty to eat, but there's no extra money for . . . . Well, if you're sick, for instance, you have to spend lots of money. Of course, lots of them depended on herbs--herbs that they cultivated in their own farms. But sometimes they had to go someplace else for illness, and that cost lots of money. And then, if they liked to, maybe, they would go out in the world and start out in business like that, they needed capital. That's why they needed the money. So, many of the villagers came out because they wanted to seek their fortunes. They earned more cash money in the outside world.

At home, it's just what you could eat and a little more that you would sell.

But they were happy and then, too, life was easy for them because they took care of the farm about ten months a year, that's all. Just before New Year, oh, the hustle and bustle. Got everything ready--the crops in and everything. So, when the winter months came during the New Year period, they didn't work for two months. Then, they started work from the early morning as soon as the sun came up, and they returned as soon as the sun went down. They would prepare their supper and take a bath. Oh, they took hot, hot baths. You know, they boiled their water in a big tripod over brick stoves. They cooked the food the same way (using) brick stoves. They would burn wood and dry grass and things like that. When they came back from work, after their baths, the young ones would, maybe, play cards (or games) like that in the early evening. They didn't have electricity--had lamps, kerosene lamps. Usually went to bed about 7 or 8 o'clock [p.m.]. They were tired after the day's work.

Let's see now. Oh, their houses. You know, like in this village here, there were over a thousand houses, close together. And then, around the houses were high walls--about twenty feet (high) walls--and on top of the twenty-feet wall, they had broken glass all around. So, it's very difficult for someone to climb over without being cut. It wasn't easy. And then, they had four doors--one faced east, one faced west, north, and south. They had volunteers from each family every night to be security guards. The gates were closed and locked, but just the same, they had to have somebody watching. In the morning, as soon as the sun came up, the people started going out with the buffaloes and chickens and ducks. They took them out in the fields to feed them. So, they'd go out, and the gates would be opened for them. The gates remained open all day until they returned. The fields were outside of the homes.

WN: Did your father have hired people--hired hands?

VZ: Yeah. Oftentimes, they had to hire people. And then, there were lots of members of the family, too. Each one would help each other. They really had a nice community life and social life. I mean, together. Family life came first. The best family life helped, you know. They cooperated with each other. You wouldn't hear them quarreling and whatnot.

WN: Was your father's family one of the richest in that village, or were most of the people in the village . . .

VZ: Yeah, [they were] because they owned lots of land. They also owned a little store, too. You know, there's a town part of the village, too, where the stores were. They would sell whatever they raised on the farm right in the store. Then, my father-in-law, too, had lots of land. I would say, just like the whole Paia Town [in size].

At the time when I was there [for a visit], he had the bus business where he transported the people here and there.

WN: Your father?

VZ: My father-in-law. He had plenty of land. Plenty homes, too. About a hundred homes.

WN: Where's your father-in-law from?

VZ: He lived in the same village. I mean, it's beyond my father's place. His section. Just like saying Kaimuki and Kalihi, like that.

WN: Districts?

VZ: Yeah.

WN: You were telling me that your father told you some story about when he was coming over here on the sailing boat?

VZ: Yes, on the sailing boat. It took them three months to get here [Hawaii]. Five hundred miles before they reached Hawaii, the storm blew them back many miles. In the sailing vessel, there were ten passengers and some crewmen. Oh, they were worried, but very fortunate, though. They reached Hawaii when they had their last bowl of rice. (Laughs) Yeah, they landed in Honolulu.

WN: This was about 1894?

VZ: Eighteen ninety-four [1894], yeah. So, they came during the [Hawaiian] monarchy days.

WN: Right, right. So, your father came to Paia to be a bookkeeper for this . . .

VZ: Yeah, for the Fung Pao Store. See, Mrs. Fung Pao is his foster sister. She's one of the first American citizens because when Hawaii was annexed to United States in 1898, she was a Hawaiian citizen and her husband also was a Hawaiian citizen. So, in 1898, they automatically became American citizens. All Hawaiian citizens were automatically American citizens. So, she was one of those. (Chuckles)

WN: One of the first. So, your father had a store background, then?

VZ: Oh, he had a store background. Uh huh. (Chuckles) There's one incident he told me. When he was young, once, they raised poppies for opium. They like the opium in pipes for smokers. They asked him to boil the poppies to make opium.

WN: This was here in Paia?

VZ: No, no. In China. And he said, "One whiff of it was enough." He didn't want any more. (Laughs)

WN: You were born in 1909, and your father had already had the store--Hew Store. The customs that you were telling me about that they had in China, did they follow it here in Paia? Did they still have the Chinese customs in Paia?

VZ: What kind of customs? Like worshipping the Buddha, they often burnt incense like that? Their religion? That's really three religions in one. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. It's three religions in one. So, they used to burn incense every morning, every evening.

WN: Your father did?

VZ: Father and mother did. But it was more like the Buddhist religion.

WN: Did you have to go to any church here in Paia?

VZ: No. There wasn't any [Chinese] church in Paia. Nobody was a minister over here or priest over here. So, there was no church. Because in China, every family had a temple of its own. Every member of the family went to the temple and worshipped twice a day--morning and night. So, every family had a temple.

WN: What was it like growing up here in Lower Paia?

VZ: Oh, I enjoyed it very much. Well, of course, I stayed in [Lower] Paia most of the time, but there were times when I spent, maybe, one or two weeks in Honolulu with my granduncle there. My mother took me and my brother, who's younger than I, and my oldest sister. At that time, there was a big wedding. A relative was getting married, so we went to Honolulu for about one week. We (sailed) on the (Kilauea), an inter-island boat. See, there was no plane at that time.

I remember I was three years old then. One morning I got up in my uncle's house. He was living at Kauluwela Lane. I said to my mother, "Oh, I miss my father. I want to go home. I want to go to the store." So, I thought I was right in Maui. I walked out Kauluwela Lane down School Street, I think it was. At that time, they had streetcars drawn by horses. So, I walked down and down, and I was trying to find my father's store. Then, a Chinese man happened to pass by. He noticed a three-year-old girl walking by herself down the street. So, he picked me up. He carried me. He was passing the same lane--Kauluwela Lane. Everybody in the house was looking for me at that time. My mother was worried. They were all on the porch and the yard. They saw this man coming up with me. (Chuckles) Oh, they were so happy to get me back. (Laughs)

WN: How often would you go to Honolulu?

VZ: Oh, just a few times for short visits, that's all. Then, we used

to go to Kula, [Maui], too, because we had an uncle who had a farm there in Kula and a store, too. He was an herbalist. So, we used to spend some time with him. Maybe one week or one weekend, like that. Those days, we had to go up there [on] horse and wagon.

WN: From Paia?

VZ: From Paia.

WN: How long did it take from Paia to Kula on the horse and wagon?

VZ: Oh, quite a number of hours. We started out in the morning and got there about lunch time. Then, the horses had to be rested. You couldn't come back on the same day. You had to come back the next day if you wanted to come back. So, people like farmers from Kula (would stay overnight in Paia). They were many Chinese in Kula in the early days, too. They raised chickens, ducks, and they got lots of eggs, too. Raised lots of corn and other vegetables.

They would often come to Paia to sell eggs to us and chickens. They couldn't go home on the same day. They'd start early in the morning, get down here about lunch time. Then, they had to sleep at our place. Our old house had an attic--an attic with rooms and beds. So, my father was running a hotel. You know, people slept there overnight. Then, the next morning, they bought groceries and whatnot from the store, filled their wagons with things that they needed, and then back they'd go to Kula. In other words, they would sell their vegetables, chickens and eggs to us, and then they'd buy groceries from us and go back.

WN: What did they [farmers] get from your father?

VZ: Well, rice, Chinese canned goods, salt fish, dried duck meat, dried pork, and dried bamboo shoots--all different things they needed for the cooking of their meals. Things like water chestnuts and whatever they needed--long rice, bean sticks, and bean curd for making steamed pork and things like that.

WN: Could they get those kind of things in Kula?

VZ: They didn't have any store. No grocery stores were up there. They just farmed. I think, later on, the Fongs opened a store or restaurant up there. I don't know. I only heard.

WN: You're talking about way early when you were still young?

VZ: Early days. Well, early days, there weren't any stores. That's why many people came down to our place.

WN: So, in the very early days, what other Chinese stores were there in Lower Paia?

VZ: If we start from the corner, we had the Wong Hin Tailor Shop, yeah? Next to him was that Fung Pao Restaurant. Next to that was the Chang's medicine store. He sold herbs--Chinese herbs and Chinese candies. Then next to that was the H. Awai's Shoe Store. That's where Nagata Store is now. Next to him was a Chinese shoemaker--shoe repair shop. Then as you move down, [where] Economy Store [is now, there was] a Japanese family [who] had a fish market there. Then next was a living house. That's an old, old Hawaiian house. Hawaiians lived there for a while, then they moved away to Honolulu, and they rented the house to a Chinese family. Then came our store. Next to our store was the Japanese Blacksmith Shop [owned by] Kawamura. Then beyond that were living houses. You know, old living houses. Hawaiians used to live around there, too. Old houses. They are torn down already.

WN: So, the Hew Store today is at the same location that . . .

VZ: Exactly at the same location, except for the first year [1906]--it was across the street where Bersamin Market is now, next to Paia Service Station, owned by Kubo--Kenneth Kubo. But it wasn't the same building because that building was burnt down in 1930. You know, when the big fire started from the corner. All the houses down to Kawamura's blacksmith shop were all burnt.

WN: We'll get into the fire a little later, okay? Right now . . .

VZ: Oh, across the street, there was--you want early stores?--in the very, very early days, I heard there was a railroad depot. Over [where] Larry's Restaurant is now. Later on, when the depot was moved to a location across the Paia Sugar Mill--Maui Agricultural Company--then, a tailor shop run by Tong Nap was opened. Then, there was the Chee Tailor Shop, but the man died when he was in the early thirties, so the wife and the five children moved away to a living house.

WN: What percent of all the businesses in Paia were Chinese-run, you think?

VZ: Well, in the very early days [before 1920], I would say three-fourths of the stores, businesses, were Chinese. Then, by 1920, (the Chinese people) started to move out. So, today, there are only three families of Chinese left here. Our family, the Chee family, and the Wong family--you know, the father had the tailor shop and the grandfather had the tailor shop, too. The grandfather had it first, and then the son-in-law. (Chuckles) They called it Ayona Store before. Oh, the man was Chinese, but I think the first name was Ah Chong, or something like that. So, they corrupted it and called it Ayona.

WN: Do you know where the Chinese went?

VZ: Yeah, most of them went to Honolulu. A few went back to China.

And, oh, lots of them are dead now in the cemetary. If you were to visit the [Paia] Chinese cemetary, you'll find many dead Chinese. (Chuckles) Let's see, now. A few went to the Mainland, but mostly to Honolulu. They left here because the owners of the stores were getting old. The children had grown up and had the education. They were educated enough to get good jobs in Honolulu, so they left for Honolulu. There were many opportunities for jobs down there. So, they left, and after they got their jobs, the parents followed [to live with their children].

WN: Do you know of any Paia Chinese who had businesses in Paia, [and whether] any of them went to Honolulu and continued in business--stores?

VZ: You mean they were former business people? Well, most of them are dead already, but the children are in Honolulu. Like the Chang's family. I think maybe a few of them are dead already. One owner--a liquor store on Lusitana Street, I think. He goes by H. Awai, I think. I mean, they had intermarried--the Chang and the H. Awai families had intermarried. I can't think of any right now, but oftentimes we do have visitors who said they were former Paia people. There's a Fung fella--I think, Martin Fung--who owns several service stations in Honolulu and plenty of property in Honolulu. According to my sister, he's a millionaire down there.

WN: Is he any relation to the Fung Pao [family]?

VZ: Yeah, yeah. That's the son. Well, if I stop to think, maybe I might be able to find or recall some of the children. They left when I was young, too. That's why I haven't kept in touch with them.

WN: When you were growing up in Paia, what kind of chores did you have around the house? What did you have to do?

VZ: Oh, ever since I was eleven [in 1920], I helped in the restauant and store. I was then in the sixth grade, so I could make the bills. We had ten Hawaiians who used to charge at the store, so I made out the bills. My father used to . . . . He had it written in Chinese, so all I had to do was to record in English. I made out the bills for him, and then I helped him collect.

WN: You said ten Hawaiians were on credit? And the rest were Chinese?

VZ: Yeah. But many Chinese paid cash. But the Chinese, well, my father made out the bills in Chinese, you see? Most of the Chinese were good. They paid their bills. There were a few who were hard up. Like one family, sort of a relative of ours. They had a farm in Kula, and they had several children. They said they had hard luck. Every time they raised chickens, the chickens would die. They raised pigs, the pigs would die. They had bad luck. One of the daughters was sick all the time. So, they didn't have much

money. They came to my father, and my father gave them rice and other kinds of foods. Father helped them a lot. When they left for Honolulu, they thanked my father very much, and they said, maybe someday, they will pay my father back.

They went to Ala Moana [Honolulu]. At that time it was swampy land. So, they raised ducks and chickens. Had a farm there. They raised pigs. Well, the old man, one day, when he was driving his horse and wagon filled with slop--he collected slop in the early morning from different people to feed his pigs--a sailor in his car bumped his wagon, and he flew off to the walk. But luckily, he wasn't killed. At that time, his son was just about eighteen, attending McKinley High School. When the principal heard that the family had such a hard time and the father couldn't work anymore, they found a job for him [the son] at Love's Bakery starting out as a bookkeeper. That was in April of the year that he was supposed to graduate. They told him they'll give him the diploma. Just go to work for Love's Bakery. So, he went to work. He worked there nearly all his life. Then he took several other accounting jobs at night--at a service station in Honolulu, and Kwai Market, places like that.

They left Ala Moana district after a while--after he had enough money to buy a living home for the family. So, he bought the home, and they moved to a better place on Clement Street below University of Hawaii. The boy supported his mother and father and six sisters. That's the only son--the oldest one. As time when on, the girls were old enough to get married. They married good husbands. The oldest sister, younger than this fella, married a Dr. Lee. But he passed away when he was forty-five years old. The youngest sister, Beatrice, is married to a Korean dentist. So, they are all doing well.

WN: Your father used to help that family out?

VZ: Yeah. But one day, they sent fifty dollars to my father. My father said he didn't need it already. (Laughs) But, just the same, (he accepted it).

WN: Did your father do that to other families, too?

VZ: They were others, too. Some were nice, and years later, they would return and pay their debts. Some of them were never heard again. But most Chinese are trustworthy. Do you know why? They're ancestor worshippers, and they wanted to be good ancestors. They didn't want their descendants to be ashamed of them.

WN: So, your father had little problems collecting bills, then?

VZ: Yeah, with the Hawaiians. Certain times when they went to their homes [to collect], they would hide. (Laughs) So, I would go. Because I was a little girl, you see? When I knocked at the door,

they would come to the door. (Laughs)

WN: Would they pay?

VZ: Well, sometimes they had enough to pay. Sometimes, they didn't. Sometimes they charged quite a bit, and then we'd stop giving them credit and that's that. We'd just lose on it, that's all. You know, many of the Hawaiians in the early days often got drunk on paydays. That's why they were not able to pay their bills.

WN: When you were a girl, some Hawaiians came to the store; Chinese came to the store. Anybody else come to the store?

VZ: Japanese, Koreans. All different nationalities used to come to the store. Especially the restaurant. All nationalities came to eat at the restaurant. They all liked saimin--the homemade saimin. They just loved my parents' apple pies and coconut pies, homemade French bread. They loved those pastries that my folks made. They [parents] made the Chinese pastries, too, in the early days. Mea'ono-pua'a and things like that. You'll be surprised, sometimes, now and then, people would return from the Mainland and Honolulu, come straight to our restaurant. They wanted saimin. Then, during my brother's time [he took over the business in 1949], they could get the homemade saimin. But now, [after VZ's brother died], his wife is the owner, and she doesn't know how to make saimin, so she buys factory-made noodles. But the broth, yeah. She makes the broth herself. She roasts pork. She puts pork and onions, too.

WN: Your mother's time, who made the noodles?

VZ: Both. But my father made the noodles nearly all the time. Only when my father was sick--whenever he had an asthmatic attack--then (my mother made them). My mother made the noodles. Oh, it was hard work. She had babies one after another. She would strap the baby on her back and make the noodles--pound the noodles, make the sheets, and cut (them) by hand with the knife--sharp, eh? Oh, my father was clever with the knife. He could cut nicely and fast. He was a very good pastry maker and noodle maker.

WN: Did your father and mother work in the store . . .

VZ: Side by side. They worked side by side. They worked together. They would get up together and they worked together. Then, with homemade bread, they would roll the dough, put (them) in the pan, and whatnot. They worked together side by side.

WN: How would they keep an eye on you folks--the kids?

VZ: Well, in the early mornings, we're fast asleep. But as soon as we're up, then my mother would feed us. She fed us breast milk--the first eight children--she fed us with breast milk. The last one, she worked so hard that she didn't get enough breast milk.

So, she fed my last brother with the canned milk--Carnation cream condensed milk. Because my brother couldn't stand fresh milk. His stomach ran when he drank fresh milk. So, she gave him canned milk. But, you know, of all the nine children, he was the coldest one. Not warmhearted. He was the one who died first. So, I was thinking, maybe breast-fed children are healthier than canned (laughs) milk babies.

WN: Your family grew up in a house behind the store?

VZ: Behind the store. Uh huh [yes]. The back section of the store. Midwives brought us into the world. Then, the last two--the eighth and the ninth children--my mother brought the babies out herself. All by herself. Cut the cords with the ordinary scissors, but she had sterilized the scissors by burning them. She bathed the babies, then she went to bed and slept by herself. Rested for several hours, and then about four or five hours later, she would get up to prepare our supper. Years later, when we talked to her about people rushing to the hospital--pregnant women to have their babies--she said she never knew what it was to be afraid. She was so busy. (Chuckles)

She said when it was time for her to give birth, she just went to the bathroom and gave birth. Then, she waited. The baby came first. Then, she had to wait for the cord and the baby bag to come out. After they came out, she cut the cord, and she wrapped the baby bag and cords and threw them away. Then she would bathe the baby [and] fix up his navel. She tied it tightly, so (that's why) none of us had protruding navels. Like some people, I notice they have ugly navels (chuckles) because they didn't get the proper care.

They let babies cry too much. My mother never allowed us to cry, you know. That's why she strapped us on her back and went to work. She did everything with us on the back. That's why she was able to take care of children and work at the same time. And then, when we were old enough to walk around, we walked around in the store and the restaurant. I guess we were good children.

She never bought any toys for us, but we made a lot of things by ourselves. Whatever we could find--boxes and whatnot. (When) we wanted to make a train, we got cans. We made our own train and things like that. We never bothered. Maybe because we understood that my parents were working hard. So, we never bothered them. We sort of took care of ourselves as soon as we were able to. And then, the older ones would take care the younger ones.

WN: You were one of the older ones?

VZ: Yeah. Older ones, so I used to take care of my little brothers and sisters. Like my younger brother, for instance. Oftentimes, my mother would shake me up in the early morning to feed my brother at 4 o'clock in the morning. She would get up at 1:30 [a.m.] to make

the bread and all that. After she got the milk in the bottle all ready, she would go to my bed, shake me up, and tell me to feed my brother. Then, I did that. So, that's how we managed. The older ones would take care the younger ones.

There was a time when my father had asthma all year. He couldn't work. So, my mother did everything--made the saimin and everything. I was then thirteen years old, so I kneaded the bread--the big panful of bread. I kneaded the dough, and my brother Sam, he was then eleven years old. At 4 o'clock [a.m.] he would get up and help my mother bake the pastries and the bread for one year. Then when my father was strong again, my father went back to working.

You know, there was one thing about my father. He never listened to anybody about any kind of medicine. There were times when people said, "Oh, try opium, and then you'll get well." Or, "Go and catch some white mice, young white mice, and roast it. Get their ashes, mix it with a little wine and drink it. You'll get well."

WN: What kind of wine?

VZ: Oh, Chinese wine. Rose wine or Mui Go Lu, they call it. Two kinds.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VZ: And there's another kind of wine. Ng Ga Pi, they call it. It's just the Chinese name. But the rose wine is very good.

WN: You said that your father never took American medicine, either?

VZ: Never wanted American medicine. You couldn't get him to drink American medicine or take American aspirin. He wouldn't take it. But, anyway, he was a healthy man. I told you about the herbs, the prescription he got and the herbs he got? Well, my mother cooked that. He drank it one time, and that cured him. Never got asthma again to his dying day. From [age] sixty to eighty-four, when he died at eighty-four and three months, he never got the asthma again.

So, it was very good medicine, but the fire that we had [in 1930], burnt the prescription. So, we couldn't help anybody who had asthma with it. Because that Chinese man [who had given VZ's father the prescription] had been dead a long time. And he left for China, oh, maybe about 1930. See, he had a Puerto Rican wife and two children here. But he said he preferred going back to China, see his relatives, and die there. So, that's what he did. He was a plantation pensioner.

WN: When you were growing up in Paia, what did you do to have fun?

VZ: Oh, I had many ways of having fun. I used to go down the beach nearly every Saturday to get shells. They had cowries, and limpets--you know, 'opihis--and pipipis. So, I'd get them and bring them home, cook them, and eat (them). Oftentimes when the tide was low, I would go swimming with some of my friends who lived here. There were lots of people here [Paia] in the early days. Lots of Chinese and Japanese. I played with Japanese children a lot, too. We went down the beach and had lots of fun. And then, we would play ball.

We made our own peewees. I don't know whether you know what I mean by "peewees." We used to get broomsticks and cut a long stick about two feet long, and then cut the pegs about six inches long and made a bias cut right on one side. We dug a hole and put a peg in the hole. With [another] stick, we hit [the peg] and we strike it. The more times you strike it, the more points you will have. Then, the last one striking it may strike it way over. And then you count your points that way by using the stick and measuring the distance that you made. So, the one who had hit the peg the farthest would be the winner. Of course, if you hit it many times, it would double it. Two times would double, and three times treble the distance. Did you ever play that game?

WN: No, what do you call that game?

VZ: They called it "peewee."

WN: Peewee. So, you have a two-foot long stick.

VZ: Yeah, broomstick. Old broomstick, we used to cut them about two feet long.

WN: Then you cut pegs about how long?

VZ: Oh, just about, maybe, eight inches. Then, we sliced it with a point on one end. Not all the way, but about one inch across--bias cut. I don't know, in material [sewing], we say bias cut.

WN: What would you do with the peg?

VZ: We would dig a hole and put the peg in, with the pointed side on the edge. We'd hit that peg on the edge. As it comes up, we hit it, hit it. And we count the number of times we hit it. Then, before it falls, we hit it as far as we can, you see?

WN: Oh. When it goes up in the air, you try to keep it up in the air?

VZ: Yeah, and more times. Do you know why? Because if [you hit it] two times, it will double the distance. Three times will treble the distance and so forth. So, you get more points that way. I don't know. Is this a new game? (Laughs) We used to play that a lot. We had lots of fun.

WN: Yeah. I talked to another person from Paia who played that game.

VZ: And then, we played marbles. Oh, we made a big circle, put all the marbles in the center. Then, from the outside edge of the ring, we would hit the marbles and whatever marbles came outside the ring would be ours. It's just like gambling (chuckles). Then, the other way was straight five holes, they called it. We made five holes in the ground, and then we shot the marbles into each hole. If somebody else's marble was in the way, we hit it, and the person would be out, yeah?

WN: What about things like holidays? What holidays would you folks celebrate?

VZ: Well, with our family, it was just Chinese New Years. We celebrate it two days in a year. We would close the restaurant and store. Of course, my mother did a lot of cooking (that day), though. We had cakes and Chinese food. Every time people talk about nine-course dinners, that's what it was whenever we have a holiday. Elaborate dinners. And pastries, like that.

Then, in the early morning, we would all dress in our best clothes. Then, we went visiting. The mother never left the house. The mother always stayed home to receive the guests. The father took the children from one Chinese house to another. We knocked at the door and we entered when the door opened. We wished each other Happy New Year. Then the owner, the adult, will give us little gifts wrapped in red paper. Usually, in the early days, we used to get twenty-five cents. Then, later on, when everything was expensive, people started to give only ten cents, and then nickels wrapped in the paper. So, each child got a gift--a monetary gift. Then, after that, we paid our respects . . . . Of course, the adults got tea and Chinese candies and Chinese cakes to eat. After you were through, you would go to the next house. Then, you start from one end (and returned to the other end). Then, after we got home, people from the other end came visiting, you see? So, everybody had a chance to be visited, and everybody had a chance to visit another family.

And then, we burned firecrackers. In the early morning of the New Year's day, my father would burn a long string of firecrackers--about five feet long. Firecrackers. The whole street would be filled with smoke. Other people, too, burned firecrackers. The little children would burn firecrackers, too. They would separate the little firecrackers and they burned them one by one. So, they had fun that way.

But that was a nice thing about the Chinese. They never did anything wrong with the firecrackers. You heard of how some people today would be so naughty. They would throw firecrackers in the toilet and break the bowls, or they would try and throw them at somebody, or they would try to burn something. In those days, there was no law against (burning firecrackers), and yet, we had no trouble. Everybody took good care of whatever he or she burned.

WN: Where would you burn the firecrackers? Right out here in the streets?

VZ: On the streets. In the early days, the roads were not macadamized. (It was during) the horse and wagon days. Only the horses had to be (chuckles) taken away, otherwise the horses would try to run away. We had dogs around too, but somehow or other, (the explosions) never bothered the animals. We took good care of the animals while we were burning firecrackers. Later on, there were macadamized roads and then, automobiles. The early days was just horse and wagon.

WN: When you burned firecrackers, would the whole community come out?

VZ: No, the only time they did was when they had big weddings. Oh, the early days, the [business] owners were all young people and they had babies one by one. Every family had many children. Whenever they have a son, for instance, the parents of the son would throw a big party. Oh, maybe about five hundred people would attend the party. You ought to see the ladies. All dressed beautifully. Beautiful clothes, fine jewelry. (They) used to wear rings on each finger--gold rings. (They are) really almost twenty-four karat, you know. Big, gold rings. Earrings, bracelets--gold bracelets--and hair ornaments, all gold, too. Gold pins and the rest. Beautiful silk clothes. All dressed up when they went to the parties. We were all dressed up, too. And then, as time went on, when they were hardly any Chinese [in Paia], my mother put away all her jewelry. Then, some of the girls in our family got some of it. She divided the jewelry among us.

WN: Where were the parties held? These five hundred people?

VZ: Well, there was a big theater, or what you called a community house. Back of Nagata Store. Mr. Nagata had taken down some of the boards and had built his garage with them. There was a big community house or theater, you called it, because they often had Chinese shows in that theater.

WN: How far would the people come from? Would they come from just Lower Paia, or other areas?

VZ: From all over, if they were invited and were able to come. You know, the horse and wagon days, it took long time to come from Kula. But [if] some of them liked--if they are related to us or very good friends of ours--they would attend our parties. But the others, well, maybe from Kula, they wouldn't attend their parties because they didn't know them. They didn't know them.

WN: What kind of food did you eat? Every day?

VZ: In the morning, we had rice. Sometimes, it's fried rice. We had milk. We didn't have pasteurized milk in the old days. My father had some cows way over at Huelo side, Kailua. He did hire cowboys--Chinese cowboys--to take care of those cows. Every time (they) milked

the cows, (they) would bring in about two big cans of it. I don't know exactly how many. Maybe each can held about five gallons. Maybe (they) brought in about ten gallons of milk each time (they) brought milk to our house. So, we had plenty of milk to drink. My mother boiled the milk before we drank the milk, so all the milk was boiled. We never used to drink just ordinary water. We used to drink tea.

We, more or less, fashioned after the American food--eggs, ham, and bacon, all that. Lunch, we usually have saimin. Supper, we have rice and Chinese cooked food. Every day (the food) would be something different. For instance, maybe, one day we might have pig's feet. You know, pickled pig's feet, and there would be some kind of vegetable, maybe chop suey or something, and then some kind of soup, maybe white cabbage soup or mustard cabbage soup. So, there was always on the menu, rice with some kind of soup, some kind of meat, and some kind of vegetable. It could be fish, could be steak. I remember the days when we had steak cooked medium rare. We ate it with my mother's salted, pickled sweet peppers. Oh, they're delicious together.

WN: Sounds good.

(Laughter)

VZ: Yeah, we had our boiled milk.

WN: Where did they get the food from? Was it all from your store?

VZ: Yeah. Salt fish. Salted things were from the store. Fresh fish, like that, Hawaiians used to bring and sell to us. If they caught lobster, they brought them to the store, we'd buy for our supper. If there were extras, we sold them to outsiders. Crab and different kinds of fish--mullet, akule, aku, all kinds. We used to buy from the people who caught them. The Hawaiian people. There were quite a number of Hawaiians here, too. They used to go fishing every day, and they were good fishermen. So, they used to bring. Maybe they ate some of the fish, and then whatever they couldn't eat, they would sell to us. That's how we got our fish.

WN: Did they sell enough for you folks to sell to others?

VZ: Sometimes. Sometimes they had plenty. Like squid, and things like that, too. Yeah.

WN: So, you got fish from the Hawaiians. How did you get the salt fish?

VZ: From China and California. I mean, not directly. It was through Wing Sing Wo Company in Honolulu. That company was an importer. And Wing Hing Company, too. Today, they call that company Wing Coffee Company.

WN: That's still in operation, huh?

VZ: See, my father would make out the order, mail it to the stores, and they (sent the groceries) by freighters--by steamers. In the early days, during the horse and wagon days, there was a depot over here. The train brought the crates from Kahului Pier straight up to Paia Depot. Then my father would pick up the freight at Paia Depot and bring the goods home. That was every week. No, twice a week. Brought in plenty boxes of food because there were so many Chinese. So, he had to supply their demand. They all liked salt fish, too. We ate a lot of salt fish, too. The flat sand fish came from California. They don't have that kind of fish in China. They're delicious. I don't know whether you have ever eaten it (or not). It's a flat salt fish.

WN: This comes in cans, or it comes dried?

VZ: Dried, dried. They have canned kind, too. Two kinds. And Chinese people love salt fish. They can live on just rice and salt fish. Just [like] how the Japanese live on ume and takuan and sometimes, aku fish.

WN: In the early days, how did your father get rice?

VZ: In the beginning, he got them from Kauai and Keanae, [Maui]. Keanae people used to raise rice. When the Chinese people first came [to Maui]--who loved to raise rice--they went straight to Keanae. Of course, in those days, there wasn't any road going to it. They have to go on horseback, and some of them, by the inter-island boats that stopped outside of Keanae shore. They would come in in the little boats. They opened the land in Keanae. Today, the descendants and other people own the taro patches [there]. They had first opened that--the Chinese opened that for raising rice. Kauai, too, the rice was raised by Chinese from Kauai. So, they came by boat and freighters. Then, later on, we got rice from California.

WN: Do you know about when it was that you folks stopped getting rice from the Chinese in Keanae and Kauai?

VZ: Maybe 1915, I think, then rice from California came in. People in Keanae quit raising rice because they said it was not profitable. So, they started raising taro, and their descendants raised taro. Till today, some of them are still raising taro--the descendants. And then, Kauai rice, too, was getting too expensive. The planters, I guess, found it not profitable. But I think, today, some of them still raise rice there. I don't know.

WN: And vegetables, your father got from Kula farmers?

VZ: Yeah, from Kula farmers. And then, there were some people [here in Paia] who raised a few things around. Like plantation laborers,

they always found time to make use of the land around them. They lived in plantation homes, but there was quite a bit of land around. So, they would plant some vegetables--certain things they liked--like Chinese peas and cabbage, won bok cabbage and mustard cabbage. So, they planted them, and they brought them to the store. They sold them to us. Then, whoever wanted to buy would buy from us. All kinds of things.

From Keanae, too, we'd have the taro; we had the poi from Keanae. In those days, poi was delicious because they hardly put water in it. You know, today, they mix other things besides taro, maybe, some kind of substitute, and put in a lot of water. So, when you bring your poi home from the market today, you don't have to add water. (Laughs) Ready to eat.

WN: The farmers that sold to your father--farmers from Kula and farmers from the plantation--did your father pay them cash or did he pay them by other ways?

VZ: Paid them cash. Cash. Always cash. My father always did his business cash after he had the experience with the Hawaiian people. One by one, he told them not to come anymore. And then, [eventually], he didn't have anybody charging.

He, himself, did his business on cash basis. See, for instance, if he made an order from the price list that Wing Sing Wo sent him, he'd send the money--the bank draft--with his letter to the firm. Then the firm sent the goods out. So, sometimes, they sent some things on their own. They wanted my father to try (them). So, they'd be a balance. They'd be a bill at the end of the month, so he paid it. Since he patronized them for so long, there was always a little balance each month or, sometimes, it's all cleared. But my father preferred doing business cash. Then, after a while--I think, after 1925--everything was strictly cash.

The restaurant business was good because it was cash. The cost was cheap. Like when they [VZ's parents] started out, one bowl of saimin cost five cents a bowl. Today, it sells for ninety cents--the same size. And rice meal that sells for twenty-five cents a meal, today, sells for $2.25.

WN: What is this? Rice?

VZ: Rice meal. You know, rice and roast pork and some kind of vegetable. One meal. They call it rice meal because it's one meal.

WN: Oh, plate lunch?

VZ: Yeah. So, the price had risen from twenty-five cents to $2.25. Lots of things, though. Our homemade bread--the loaf bread, one-pound bread--used to sell for ten cents a loaf. Our French bread, five cents a loaf. Well, today, a loaf bread that you get from

Love's Bakery, retails over here, you pay ninety cents. The wholesale (price) is seventy-two [cents], I think. See how the prices have gone up? It's inflation. Terrible, terrible.

WN: What about the store, itself? Everybody paid cash to your father? Customers?

VZ: Yeah, except a few who were hard up. They couldn't pay, so my father, (being) a kindhearted man, always let them have the food because he knew it was hard raising a big family without food. Everybody liked my father because he was a generous man. Very, very generous.

WN: Most of the people paid cash, though. Not too much credit.

VZ: After all the people who charged were out, then after that, when they came back to buy anything, it's cash. In the early days, when they came to buy poi, they brought their own bag or container. We'd weigh the container, then put in the poi, then weigh the whole thing. In those days, the beginning, it was only about five cents a pound.

WN: So, when you folks got the poi from the Keanae farmers, how would they bring it? What kind of container would they be in?

VZ: (They brought the poi in barrels.) Well, when they started to have trucks--motor vehicles--they brought them in trucks. Before that time, that's horseback. In bags, because the road wasn't open in the early days. All the way from Kailua to Keanae, one had to go by horseback. But steamers would anchor outside of the Keanae shore, and the little boats would bring in people and things to shore. Something like Mala wharf in Lahaina, I think. The big steamers never used to park alongside the pier. (They were) outside, eh? People came in little boats.

WN: They came into Keanae?

VZ: Yes. There were quite a number of fishermen over here with their canoes, you know, along this [Paia] beach, before. They used to go fishing a lot in the canoes. But today, you don't find any over here. (Laughs)

WN: You folks would weigh the container, and put poi inside, and then charge them? They would pay?

VZ: Yeah, the people who wanted to buy poi. But mostly, Hawaiian people bought the poi.

WN: What about rice? Did you sell it the same way?

VZ: Well, by the pound. Of course, like Chinese who have big families, they often bought by the bag--100 pounds at one time. Right after

payday, they would buy one big bag--a 100-pound bag of rice. Early days, very early days, (the cost) was one dollar to two dollars (for) 100-pound bag of rice. Gradually, the price went up as years went on. Today, it's very expensive. (Laughs)

WN: Did you go to Paia School?

VZ: I went to Paia School. I (started attending) Paia School when I was six years old. (When I was six years old), we had a bad storm around the middle of January, 1916. I was almost drowned that day on January 18, I think, or 16th. Well, in those days, the plantation ditch water had overflowed during the storm. They had a tunnel under the road. The road was already macadamized at that time. They had built the tunnel for all the ditch water from this side of the cane field to go out into the ocean. There was no building. Across, now [today], is the Rainbow Service Station there and the electric power plant--substation or what you call that. There were no buildings there. It was sort of an open place, somewhat like a wide ditch. So, the water would go--plantation ditch water--went right out to the ocean that way.

See, in the early days, I heard it was a fish pond. That's where the Hawaiians had fish ponds. Then, later on, when the Chinese came in, they used to raise their ducks over there because the ducks love water. Today, it's all filled now. People live there. A service station and homes (were built) there. So, the plantation closed that tunnel when the houses came up. Water no longer passed that way out to the ocean.

Yeah, I almost drowned because my oldest sister and I were throwing sticks into the ditch water on this side of the road--opposite side of the ocean. There were other children playing, too, and we all crowded around and wanted to see the little twigs go in the water, go under the tunnel. Then we'd run across to see where they came out. Somehow, my sister accidentally pushed me. I went into that water, through the tunnel, and I was floating at the top. There was a pipe across the tunnel at the end before entering into the ocean. I held onto that pipe tightly.

Meanwhile, my sister had called for help. A Japanese man, Taniguchi, who had rented a house from us came to my rescue. We owned the house he lived in down here. It's no longer there, it's torn down. He came to help me. He told me to let go, and he'd pull me out. I was so frightened, I held onto the pipe very tightly until finally, I had to pull my hand off from one pipe, and I had to let go and let him pull me up. Oh, I was dripping wet from my head to my feet. When I got home, my mother scolded me for playing there and scolded my sister for pushing me. I said it was an accident. Then my mother gave me a hot bath, washed my hair and all that. Then, she cooked lots of roast pork. The man [Taniguchi] had a big family, see? So, she cooked lots of roast pork and gave it to him for saving me. His children and I were very good friends. We used to

play together a lot. They are in Honolulu, now.

WN: Later on, as you were getting older, you started to have some odd jobs? Did you work while you were going to school?

VZ: Yeah. I worked. You mean, in the store and the restaurant? Yeah, in our store and restaurant, ever since I was eleven, I started to work. Wash dishes, and all that. Took care of babies, cleaned the house. I went to school at the same time. We walked to school. In the early days, we didn't have any cars or buses to take us to school. We walked all the way from here to Paia School, which was about two miles away. We would start early in the morning, as soon as it was daybreak. You know, as soon as we could see, we walked up. There were many other children walking with us, so it was fun. We talked and we played on the way to school. It took us about half an hour to get to school. It was uphill, you see? We carried our books in schoolbags, so we wouldn't lose our books and pencils.

We bought our own books in the early days--every book we needed for the class, like spelling book and arithmetic book, science books. All the books we needed for the class, we bought them. Of course, we had younger sisters or brothers. Then, the next sister or brother will use the same books unless they were out of edition or if the school changed to a different kinds of books.

On a rainy day, we would get wet oftentimes, but we would have heavy coats and walked to school with our heavy coats. We had a very nice principal who was all for children. Miss Fleming. She was a principal at Paia School for forty-seven years. She was my principal; she was also the principal of my youngest brother [and] all my brothers and sisters, except my oldest sister who was at a boarding school--Maunaolu Seminary. When she [Miss Fleming] found that we were wet, she would send us out of the classroom and took us to the kitchen. She would make hot chocolate for us and would let us stand around the kerosene stove so we'd get warm and dry. Because it was useless to send us home through the rain.

Then, after school, I found that the road was downhill, and sometimes, I loved to get home early. So, I would run all the way from school. And then, I would stop. The first stop would be in front of, maybe, the [Paia sugar] mill over there. I rested there. I walked. It was just like resting for about five minutes. Then I would run the rest of the way home. I would get home in about ten minutes. (Laughs) Other times, we would take our time coming home and stopped at the sugar mill. There we'd find carloads of burnt sugar cane. We'd help ourselves to one, and we'd chew the sugar cane. We used our teeth to take off the skin, and then we'd chew the sugar cane.

WN: Once in a while, would you folks go to Kahului? Would you sometimes go to Kahului for trips?

VZ: The early days? Only during county fair time. The first county

fair was in 1916, I think, at Wailuku. At that time, there were trucks.

WN: Oh, you rode a truck?

VZ: No, we didn't. My father bought the truck in 1920, but he didn't take us because the plantation trucks took us down. It was free. They brought some animals from the Waikiki Zoo, and we saw those animals. It's like a carnival. We had rides and school displays, so forth. Then, the following year and ever since that time, 1917, it was at the Kahului Fairgrounds. We went once a year. In the early days, the plantation furnished the train and the train cars. They built makeshift benches in the train cars, so we all got into the train cars. They really were cars to carry cane, you know. We went down in the mornings with our teachers. Our teachers escorted us--more like our chaperones. We dropped off at Kahului Depot. We got on at Paia Depot, we got off at Kahului Depot. Then, you know where--I think it's (where the) First Federal Bank is now located. Do you know where the Burger King [Kahului] across the street is now located?

WN: Oh, yeah, across Puunene Avenue.

VZ: Yeah, uh huh, Puunene Avenue. That railroad depot was there. We got off the cars there, and the teachers would line us up and take us to the fairgrounds. So, we did go to Kahului once a year. Later on when more automobiles (and trucks) came into existence, (we rode on them). Sometimes, we went with friends. I know we had one good friend--the Chinese man who owned a store over there--Loy. Quon Sun Loy, they called that store. He had a sedan in the early days--a Ford sedan. You know, there was a war in . . . . Beginning of war [World War I] was in 1917. The war ended in 1918, I think. After the war, we celebrated. I was a friend of one of his daughters, so the man took his daughters and me, and we were in a parade. Cars went from this side, Paia, to Wailuku. We sang songs. Songs like "Get Your Gun and Get the Kaiser." (Chuckles) All the way back, we would sing, too, war songs. "Keep the Fires Burning" and so forth. We did travel. But not too much.

WN: Going back a little bit, when your father and mother began the store, do you know how much they needed to start?

VZ: Capital? One hundred dollars.

WN: How did you know that?

VZ: My mother told me. Started with $100. And they made their own tables and chairs out of (wooden) boxes. In the old days, apples and oranges all came in boxes. Chinese groceries all came in boxes. They made their own tables and chairs out of (wooden) boxes. They made a lot of things by hand to be used. They started with the kerosene stove--three-burner kerosene stove and an oven.

Kerosene stove oven. They used kerosene lamps because we didn't have electricity till 1924. I was a sophomore in high school when we first had electricity.

WN: Everything was kerosene?

VZ: We used kerosene lamps. I remember we had nine of them in the house. Every morning, my mother used to put the lamps together and cleaned the chimneys because oftentimes the chimneys would be covered with soot. Especially if you turn the wick high, the flame high, the chimneys got black with soot. She had to clean them every morning, so they'd be bright at night when we used them.

Because we never used to close the business until 8 o'clock at night. We did that until the day that World War II was declared. Then, we stopped opening till late at night. We closed early. Because in the beginning, it was blackout period. But still yet, my folks got up early in the morning to make the pastries with very little light. The globe was small, and had only an opening at the bottom--a circular opening. It was all black. (All) the globes were black. Only at the bottom, they gave a little light. You could see very little. But still yet, my parents kept on opening early.

WN: What time did they open?

VZ: They opened at 4:30 [o'clock a.m.].

WN: Four thirty to 8 o'clock [p.m.]?

VZ: Yeah, in the beginning. You mean, early days? Yeah, they'd open 4:30 [a.m.] till 8 o'clock at night. But they got up at 1:30 [a.m.] to prepare all the bread and the pastries, because in the early days, people started to work very early. By 5 o'clock [a.m.], they were out working, already. As soon as they could see. So, they wanted to eat their breakfast and make their lunches before they could go out to work. So, we had to get those things ready for them. Some of them came in to drink coffee and had pastries or bread like that for breakfast. The people liked my mother's and father's French bread. They were delicious. Yeah, they used to give free butter and jelly--guava jelly that my mother made herself. We would help her gather guavas or some friend might bring in guavas or she would buy from someone who gathered them. Then, she would cook the guavas, mashed them up, added sugar, and made jelly out of that.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 7-44-1-80; SIDE ONE

WN: What was the most popular item that you folks sold in the restaurant?

VZ: In the restaurant? The homemade saimin. And the French bread. We had the apple pies and the coconut pies, too. Oh, they were sold for only five cents (each). We got the coconuts for the coconut pie from Kauai in the beginning, and later on, from the Hana district. My father used to put the coconuts in the oven to heat until the shells cracked. Then he brought them out from the oven, and then it was easy to take the coconut meat from the shells--separate the shells and the coconut. Then he would grate the coconut and cook it with sugar. Then that would be the filling for the coconut pie. The apple, he used the dried apples, or the canned apples later on, or fresh apples that he would peel and boil with sugar. Of course, they had to be mashed up (before they were used).

WN: What about running water? Was there running water in those days?

VZ: No. In the very beginning, there was no running water. Every home had a well, but it's brackish water and could be used only for washing and like that, but not for drinking. So, fresh water was caught in rain barrels and covered or they would go to a plantation pump well. From the well, they would get the fresh water. But it was awfully hard work because, like what my mother told me, she would carry two buckets of water suspended by the bamboo stick over one shoulder, and she would walk with the water all the way from the well to her restaurant. And what did she find? One-half of the water would be gone. (Chuckles) You know, the water had splashed out as she walked. Oh, sometimes, she felt like crying. (Chuckles)

WN: So, about how far would she have to walk?

VZ: About quarter of a mile. My parents worked hard. They worked about sixteen hours a day, maybe more, I don't know. They managed to raise four pigs at a time, because all the slop we got from the restaurant was enough to feed four pigs. They raised four pigs at a time. They bought the pigs when they were piglets. Then, they would raise them until they were big enough to be slaughtered, and they would sell them to the slaughterhouse or the butchershop. Then, they would get four new ones--pigs. They rotate that way. They raised some sweet potatoes and turnips to feed the pigs. They took very good care of the pigs. They raised some chickens, too. Because they owned the land over here, you know. They bought the land in the very early days, so there was no house over here. So, they raised the pigs right there, where that house is over there. You see? Not that old house, beyond that. They had their pigs over there, and their chickens, and their sweet potatoes and turnips. Sometimes they planted corn, too.

WN: Would they sell the pigs?

VZ: Yeah. When they were grown, when they were ready to be slaughtered, they would sell the four pigs. Then they would get four young pigs to raise again.

WN: You once said that some of the goods that your father got came from Canada?

VZ: Groceries? Yeah, especially the Chinese sausages. Our government didn't allow any pork sausages from China, so we bought our Chinese sausages--indirectly--from Vancouver, Canada and from San Francisco, California.

WN: Your father's store sold groceries, vegetables, can goods, and so forth. Was there anything else that he sold? Did he sell dry goods?

VZ: In the early days, there weren't very many stores. So, they sold clothing--work clothes. Especially khaki pants, 'ahina pants--denims, they call them, and khaki shirts. And shoes, working shoes. And then, they sold yards of material. Lots of people bought material. Like women, they bought material to make dresses. So, they sold material. They sold nearly everything you can think of. For your hair, they'd be combs and brushes. There would be towels, washcloths. For your teeth, there would be toothpaste, toothbrushes. You know, nearly everything you could think of, we sold. Things, we ourselves would use, too.

They sold candies. They even sold--without the electric refrigerator--cold drinks, soda water. Nearly every day, Maui Ice and Soda Works used to bring ice. They put the ice in the icebox. That's how they could keep things cool. After we got electricity, then we got an electric refrigerator, and we had ice cream in the freezing compartment. Then my mother made the ice cubes for sale.

WN: About when did you folks get the refrigeration?

VZ: Oh, shortly after we got electricity. Maybe about in 1924. We started getting electricity in 1924, so shortly after that, we got it.

WN: Where did your father get the dry goods and things from?

VZ: There was the A&B Stores at Kahului and Paia. The big plantation stores. There was the Maui Dry Goods Store and the Theo Davies from Honolulu.

WN: So, very early, in the early days, you would still get from those places?

VZ: Yeah. Oh, there were Japanese salesmen representing different Japanese stores who used to sell candies (and some Japanese goods). They would take orders for candies and goods, and they'd send them up by freight from Honolulu.

WN: Okay. We covered a lot, but there's still a lot more to cover.

VZ: Well, you can ask more questions.

WN: We still have to get into the 1930s.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 7-55-2-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Violet Hew Zane (VZ)

March 5, 1980

Lower Paia, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mrs. Violet Hew Zane. Today is March 5, 1980, and we're at her home in Lower Paia, Maui.

Okay, Mrs. Zane, this time, I'd like to continue talking about the Hew Store when your father was running it. Do you remember some of the costs of some of the goods? For example, rice?

VZ: Rice in the early days, according to my parent, was one dollar for a 100-pound bag. Then gradually, after few years, it went up two dollars, three dollars, four and five. Of course, today, it's way up. (Chuckles)

WN: How about some other things?

VZ: Well, you take, for instance, the duck meat. The dried duck meat from China was selling for just twenty-five cents each. The Chinese sausages--of course, from California or Canada--selling for just about ten cents a pound. Very cheap. You know, also the sweet pork. All ten cents a pound. Many things were sold for ten cents a pound. We had canned water chestnuts and bamboo shoots. Bitter melon and canned chicken. So many things that it takes time to recall every item.

WN: Things like the pork and the duck, did that come fresh?

VZ: Dried.

WN: Where did it come from?

VZ: From China, except the sausages came from either California or Vancouver, Canada.

WN: Did your father work through a distributor on the things that came from China?

VZ: No, retail. He sold them retail.

WN: I mean, how did he get it?

VZ: From Honolulu through Wing Sing Wo Company or Wing Hing Company. Wing Hing is now called, I think, Wing Coffee Company. The present Wing Coffee Company. They shipped (the goods) from Honolulu and brought them here by freighters--inter-island freighters. When (the goods) got to Kahului, they were brought to Paia Depot by train. Then my father picked the goods up with his horse and wagon from the Paia Depot. Later on, when he got a truck, he used the truck getting the goods home.

WN: Did salesmen come from Wing Sing Wo and Wing Hing?

VZ: Yeah, most of them.

WN: Did they come over to Maui to sell your father things?

VZ: No. My father wrote to them, and he'd put in an order through the mail. He sent bank drafts to pay for the goods. He usually sent, oh, about completely or three-fourths of the cost of the items to the company. Then, at the end of the month, the company would send him a little bill on the balance, and then my father would pay that with the next order.

WN: Your father would pick up goods from where? The Kahului Harbor?

VZ: Hardly. Most of the goods came to Paia Depot. Once in a while, he went to Kahului to pick up something. He used the horse and wagon during the early days. There weren't any macadamized roads in the early days. Sometimes the wheels of the wagon would get stuck in the mud. Sometimes it would be easier to run along the sand. The beach is different today compared to (what it was in) the early days. Since the tidal wave of 1946, we don't have as much sand area. We have more rocks here now.

WN: When did your father get his first car?

VZ: I think he bought it from somebody who had the car before him. I think at that time, Haleakala Motors was open already. I remember getting my first car in 1928. A four-door Chevrolet sedan. It was sold for $1,000.

WN: This is your father's car?

VZ: No, my car.

WN: Oh, your car. Your father, did he get a car before that to pick up goods?

VZ: Yeah, before that. From 1920. I remember driving the truck one day to school, to Maui High, which was located at Hamakua Poko--of course, the town is no longer there--when I was a freshman. See,

I was learning to drive then. (Laughs) It was fun driving the Model T Ford. It was very different from cars today. I've seen the various changes in cars. You know, from the Model T type, and then later on, as the gear type--standard shift. Then, now, it's hydraumatic driving. So much easier. (Chuckles)

WN: Did you see any changes after your father got the Model T? Did it make it easier for him to go and pick things up?

VZ: Oh, yeah. Very much easier. He didn't have to take care of the horse anymore. He had to feed the horse and bathe the horse at times. You know, cleaned the horse and so forth. But he no longer had that job of taking care of a horse. He sold the horse. And gasoline was cheap at that time, very cheap. You could run (the car) for about a month--but not too far--very cheaply. You didn't go far. I know with my car, I went to Wailuku several times, and Kahului, and places like that. (Gasoline cost me) only about twenty dollars a month. That's all I paid for gasoline. So, he was paying very little for gasoline because it was cheap. Maybe about ten dollars a month, that's all.

WN: Do you know how much he paid for that Model T?

VZ: Oh, how much did it cost him? I think it was about $200. (Chuckles)

WN: Used car?

VZ: Yeah, secondhand car, but it wasn't too old. I think it was a 1915 model that he bought in 1920.

WN: Did your father use the car to go to places like Keanae, too, to pick up poi and things like that?

VZ: No, that's too far. There was no road for cars at that time. People had to go on horseback from Kailua to Keanae. But he went as far as Haiku. He delivered goods to the people at Haiku, and Hamakua Poko, and Paia Camp, and Spreckelsville. At that time, there was a plantation camp there. I mean, not like today. You don't have a camp there anymore. You don't have the Hamakua Poko Camp anymore. And Haiku, there's hardly any Chinese now.

WN: After he bought the car, he would still ride a horse to Keanae?

VZ: No, he never rode a horse to Keanae. Only people, who want to travel in the early days from Keanae to out here [Paia], had to ride the horse to get in and out. There was no road between Keanae and Kailua. I don't know whether you know that place or not. On your way to Hana.

WN: After your father got the car, people still brought things to him from Keanae?

VZ: Yeah, they did. They did. Then, from Kula, too, they would. They

got their trucks, too, later on. So, they didn't use their horses and wagons. They used trucks. So, there was a change. The life was easier, I think. The farmers no longer had to sleep overnight in Paia. They could bring their goods in the morning, return, maybe, lunch time.

WN: About when did you start to notice trucks instead of horse and buggy?

VZ: Oh, about 1918, I think. Yeah.

WN: Did any wholesaler deliver directly to your father?

VZ: The A&B Store [in Kahului] sent a salesman up to the store to take orders, and Maui Dry Goods did, too. But at that time, there were cars running. They used cars, and then trucks delivered the goods. Many times the Kahului Railroad trucks delivered goods from Kahului. They used trucks to deliver goods. But from Paia Store, there was no salesman who came. My father went to the store and put in his order. Then, if there were only a few things, he brought the goods himself, but if there were many things to be delivered, then the store truck--Paia Store truck--delivered the goods.

WN: You were telling me earlier that in 1920--according to this photo here--he built a new building on the same site as the store?

VZ: Same site. Business continued to go on all the time the building was being put up, because the new building was built around the old building. And then when it was finished, they took off the old building. Gradually, they took off the old building.

WN: So, you never had to close the store, then?

VZ: No, never had to close the store. Well, we had wonderful carpenters in the old days. (Chuckles)

WN: Why did your father decide to put up a new building?

VZ: Well, he thought it was best to have a nice, new building instead of living in an old building.

WN: In 1924, you said that people started having electricity?

VZ: Yeah, in Paia. Started to have . . .

WN: How did that change the way the store was run?

VZ: There were some changes, like we had the electric refrigerator. We could sell ice cream and cold soda water. My mother made some ice cubes and sold ice cubes. There were other things that could be refrigerated. In the old days, without electricity, my mother seldom cooked more than she could sell for the day. That's why there wasn't any need for refrigerators.

But usually after parties, we have leftovers. She would boil the leftovers, set that aside. Next day, before eating, she would boil the food again. So, the food never spoiled. Then, the Chinese spices helped to preserve the food. So, there wasn't any necessity for food being frozen to keep them fresh. And then, lots of food would be salted and dried. So, that kept them in good condition.

Oh, yeah, life was easier for my folks [after electricity came in]. My mother no longer had to clean chimneys every morning. She had about nine lamps to clean every morning. You know, the chimneys got black whenever the flame was big or the wind was blowing. So, every morning she had to clean the chimneys, otherwise (we couldn't) get a good light.

WN: Wait a minute. The chimney?

VZ: Yeah, very nice chimneys. Some of them are the type that you put up on the ceiling by some kind of container with chains to the ceiling. There are some types that are set on the table. We never used gas lamps. There were some people who used gas lamps.

WN: Oh, by "chimney," you mean the things to cover the kerosene lamp?

VZ: Yeah. See, that's the glass part. You would think of them as the bulbs. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, you called it "chimney"?

VZ: Yeah, I call it "chimney," because smoke would come out through there and soot would come out through there. I call it a lamp chimney, I don't know what you would call it today.

WN: After electricity came in, you had a refrigerator; you had lights. Anything else?

VZ: Well, that's all. We didn't use much electricity for anything else. Electricity was cheap in the early days, too. And water, too. We used a lot of water in the restaurant, and we only paid about one dollar half [$1.50] or two dollars per month. And electricity, not more than five dollars a month.

WN: So, you folks got a refrigerator after electricity came in? How did you folks keep things cold before that?

VZ: Oh, we had an icebox made by carpenters. There's a freezing compartment where you put in chunks of ice from the Maui Soda Ice Works. That (firm) would deliver that. Trucks were running at that time. So, every day, they would bring ice and soda water. The big chunks of ice would be placed in the freezing compartment of the box, because that could only last one day. It melts by the end of the day. The other section of the box, well, in the other section, we put things there to be chilled.

Then, my mother used to make homemade ice cream, too. She bought the chunks (of ice) and broke them into pieces. She had the old-fashioned [ice cream] freezer that she ground by hand. She made the mixture of fresh milk, and sugar, and vanilla extract. She would boil that, and then cool it, and then put it in the freezer--in the container. Then, she put the top on, put the handle so that she could crank it. And then, she put some salt on top of the ice, so it would last longer. She would crank the ice cream until it's hard.

WN: After it's made, how would you keep it cold?

VZ: The ice stayed on for quite some time, maybe about five hours.

WN: How would it be sold?

VZ: It was sold just five cents a plate. Oh, I would say, equivalent to about four scoops for five cents. (Chuckles)

WN: After you folks got electricity, did your mother continue to make her own ice cream?

VZ: No, we bought ice cream to sell. But we didn't have it like we have it today, in separate popsicle or drumsticks and like that. You know, separate pieces. They were in a container in a can. So, we sold it in bulk. We bought cones, and they would use the scoop and put (the ice cream) in a cone. The container with the ice cream would be in the freezing compartment. But not much. I mean, [just] enough [so] that it would [fit] in the freezing compartment. Nearly every day, we'd buy that.

WN: You would buy ice cream every day?

VZ: Yeah, we bought ice cream every day, because we didn't buy plenty. Just enough that we could sell for the day. Yeah, with the big blocks of ice, we made shaved ice. We had the old-fashioned way of cutting the ice. The shaved ice would be put into cups, then sugar and extracts put in it, or . . .

WN: How did you shave the ice? Did you have one of those electric ice machines?

VZ: No, not electric--it's sort of a boxlike thing, something like wood shaver that's turned upside down.

WN: Oh, I see. Like a plane?

VZ: Yeah, like a plane. You put the bowl underneath.

WN: Was it a plane, or did it look like a plane?

VZ: Yeah, somewhat like a plane. Yeah, looks like a plane, but it's much bigger. Maybe about ten inches long, and the box is just

about wide and long enough to hold a bowl underneath--a good sized bowl, say, about a gallon size. When you shave the ice by hand, the shavings will go underneath into the bowl. I think, sometimes, during carnivals, don't they have that?

WN: I know they have the electric kind.

VZ: Oh, the electric kind? Not the hand kind where you just push the ice over the blade. Yeah, electric kind, I guess the machine does it. Electric machine does it, eh?

WN: It seems like your store, there was a lot of things to sell--like ice cream, shave ice, and everything.

VZ: Yeah, oh, many, many things.

WN: At one time, how many clerks were needed in that store? Could one person do it?

VZ: Yeah, one person could do it. My father and mother did a lot of work. Then, certain times, like if we went on a vacation or if my mother had a new baby and was unable to work, then we hired somebody. And then, as we grew old enough to help, each child helped. At eleven, I started to work in the store and the restaurant. (I sold things) and whatnot, waited [in the restaurant], washed dishes, all kinds (of work).

I know one brother told me, he said, "Oh, I used to pick guavas for Mama all the time so she could make guava jelly." (Chuckles) Lots of guava trees around, before, you know. The place was quite wild, filled with vegetation and trees.

WN: Was the restaurant separated from the store?

VZ: Just by a door, yeah. Separate section, but just separated by a door. If you look at this picture. The original one, you enter the store first, and then there was a door like that.

WN: Regular door?

VZ: And you go in, and the restaurant is right back (of it).

WN: Oh, so a wall separated the store from the restaurant?

VZ: Yeah, a wall except for a door that you enter through the store. When we built this house here, you'd find that we lived upstairs. Then there were separate doors for the restaurant and the store. You entered the restaurant here, and then the store here.

WN: In 1928, you said that you sort of took over for a while from your father?

VZ: Yeah, for about--vacation--about three months. When my father was

away. My mother made the pastries, and bread, and all that, but we got a helper during those three months. But I managed the whole thing--business. I took care of everything. Like when the salesmen called, I gave them the order, and they gave the bills, and I paid the bills.

WN: You were nineteen years old . . .

VZ: Yes. And I wrote to Honolulu for the order of Chinese goods. All that. I did the picking up of goods at Paia Depot.

WN: On the truck?

VZ: On the truck. Same.

WN: So, your father trusted you enough to go to China and leave you in charge?

VZ: Yeah. (Laughs) Yeah, I worked hard when I was young. I was a husky girl.

WN: Did everything go off okay? Did you have any problems?

VZ: No problems at all. No problems at all. My mother always told me what she wanted, then I did the ordering.

WN: Did your father choose you because you were the oldest?

VZ: Yeah. I was the second in the family. My oldest sister didn't know much about the business because she was away to the boarding school most of the early years. The others were too young, and then they didn't spend much time in the store and the restaurant as I did. I knew more about it than anybody else in the family.

I was the only one who remained with my father and mother during the last days. In fact, I took care of my mother the last 3-1/2 years of her life. My mother was good. She was able to walk around, able to feed herself. But I had to see to it that she got her food every meal, and that she got her bath, and the laundry done, and all that. I took care of her right in this house. My father, too. Well, my mother took care of him, too, because my mother was [still] young [at that time]. She was twenty years younger than my father, so she was young enough to take care of him. Whenever she's busy, I took care of him. But he was able to walk, doing practically everything, except that we had to see to it that he got his meals, like that. You know, that he's comfortable, and that he's clean. They were very fortunate that they were not bed invalids like some elderly people that have to be cared for like children. My parents were never like that.

WN: Okay, can you tell me something about the fire, the Paia fire, in 1930? What do you remember about it?

VZ: About midnight, July 5, 1930, right after the closing of the carnival at Kahului, when we were fast asleep, we heard someone yelling, "Fire, fire!" So, we all got up, and we looked out through the window, and we saw a fire going at the corner. Oh, we quickly picked up some of our things and dashed out of the house. Then, we looked up, and the fire was still going. The policemen were on the road. The policemen told us to get away because they were dynamiting the houses. The fire trucks were very slow in coming. I think we didn't have any [fire station] at that time in Paia. We had one at Wailuku. It came up, but the water pressure was so low that they couldn't put out the fire with little water. The fire burnt many buildings before it was finally put out.

As I said, it burnt our building all the way from the corner. All the houses on our side and the houses across the street, up to the Paia Service Station. We thought somebody set the fire to collect insurance, but that's all I can say about it. I do not like to give my idea or mention the name of a person who started the fire. Somebody did start the fire to collect insurance. That's all I can say.

WN: That's what you heard, or is that what really happened?

VZ: I knew. Of course, insurance people investigated. The police, too. They found cans of gasoline in that area near [where] the fire started.

WN: Was the [Hew] Store totally destroyed by the fire?

VZ: Totally destroyed, except for the few things we could get out before the fire came halfway down [the block]. Because we were thinking about saving our own lives. So, our money and jewelry, we got our hands on--maybe, each one, a valise full of things--and just rushed out. Just dumped everything in and rushed out.

WN: About how many merchants lost their buildings?

VZ: I can't count offhand, but, of course, there were people living in some homes, too. There were homes [that were destroyed], too, on the roadside, as well as the merchants. But I would say, let's see now, how many? From the corner, we have . . . . (Pause) Seven on our side of the street. Across the street, I think--let's see now--four. [The Maui News reported that fifteen business establishments were destroyed by the fire, which left 150 people homeless.]

WN: From the corner of Baldwin Avenue and Hana Highway toward your store, then?

VZ: Yeah. Uh huh. The fire didn't touch Paia Mercantile, you know. The one across [the street from where the fire originated]. Didn't touch it at all. It's just down on our side. Whatever the fire didn't take in 1930, in 1946, (the tidal wave) took the other

buildings down here.

WN: Okay, we'll get into that tidal wave little later, yeah? So, your store was totally destroyed, so how long did it take your father to rebuild again?

VZ: Three months. The carpenters started work right away, so in three months, the two buildings [store and house] were completed. Our store opened in September, 1930. See, the fire took place on July 5. Then, September 1, we opened the store.

WN: What about other merchants? Were they able to rebuild quickly?

VZ: Some of them [rebuilt] a few months later. Like my father was in a hurry because he had the family to support. You know, so many children. At that time, I was away studying already, and my brother, too. My fourth brother was a senior at Maui High School. He's a doctor (today--a pathologist).

WN: So, you were in Honolulu when the fire started?

VZ: No, I was here [Paia]. It was [summer] vacation time. But I was studying in Honolulu at the time. My father and mother managed to start over again. I went back to school.

WN: Was there anything like insurance that your father . . . . Any kind of insurance?

VZ: My father never carried any insurance. Never. Yeah, that's a funny thing. He wanted to carry life insurance. He wasn't very young. When he first married, my father was thirty-six. But a few years later, he wanted to take life insurance. The insurance company rejected him because he had asthma. Oh, so, my father didn't buy any life insurance. But, when I think back, it's fortunate he didn't buy any because look at the many years he [would have] to pay premiums. He lived to eighty-four and three months. He wasn't sick except for the asthma, and then [he] only [had asthma] up to sixty. After sixty, he no longer got the asthma. As I said, once he got a very good herb that cured him, and (he was cured).

WN: So, he never thought of getting insurance for the store?

VZ: No. No insurance for the store. The people who lived further up, like the Dang Hus, and the Wongs like that, and the Tam Chong folks, they carried insurance. They carried insurance only a month, and then the fire started. So, I don't know if any of them got any money or not.

WN: So, after your father rebuilt the store--oh, by the way, the store that he rebuilt, is that the one that's still standing today?

VZ: Standing today. That was built in 1930. So, today is 1980 now,

this September, it will be fifty years old. But the house has been remodeled and repaired, kept in good condition all these years. Like, twenty years ago, the patio, the lavatories, and the garage were built by my brother Patrick. He then owned the store because my father had died five years before.

WN: After 1930 and after he rebuilt the store, what changes did you notice?

VZ: We had a larger section to hold the goods. The restaurant was larger and more airy, well lighted. I know that building is very good. It's never warm like in some restaurants that face the sun. [Some] get awfully warm during the summer, but our place is good (and cool).

WN: Yeah, I had lunch there today.

VZ: Today? You don't find it hot in there, yeah? What did you have? Saimin?

WN: Yeah.

VZ: Yeah, our saimin is good. But, of course, it would be better if you had our homemade one in the early days. (Laughs) But it's good enough, because my sister-in-law makes the broth somewhat the way we made it, but only ours a little better. The roast pork, the same way. My mother's is better, but it's good enough, good enough. (Chuckles) It's tasty enough. In fact, much better than the other restaurants that serve saimin.

WN: After 1930, did you notice more stores coming into Paia or anything like that?

VZ: After 1930? What, new ones? Well, not right away. Gradually, we began to have. Like the Kadosaki Barbershop across the street. Then, we had a furniture store across Hew Store. Of course, the shoe repair shop, well, the owner had bought the place there and had opened his shop there because his was burnt. His was somewhere around here--his shoe repair shop.

WN: Right next to your store?

VZ: Somewhere around here. He was a Chinese man. He's deceased now. No dependents. It's the present pool hall now, Augie Pool Hall. He had his shoe repair shop. And then, the Fukuda Service Station. The building's practically gone now, you know, with the (lack of maintenance and the weather conditions).

WN: So, was the competition getting . . .

VZ: Yeah, was getting keen because the other stores like . . . . I don't know, when did [Minoru] Hayashida [another interviewee] come in?

WN: I think he told me [1932].

VZ: Yeah. They sold fish and few other things. Did he tell you what he sold?

WN: Fish and shōyu.

VZ: Yeah, he made his own shōyu. And then, right next to him was that [Mae] Itamura's [another interviewee] Liquor Store. Then, we have the--did you interview the Nagata Store people? I think they came in right next. The present Nagata Store.

WN: Did they all come in about this time?

VZ: After the fire. It was after the fire, they came in. I don't know when they bought that piece right next to their building. Maybe after 1940, I think.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: How about Chinese stores? Were there more Chinese stores coming up?

VZ: None. Chinese never came back after they left Maui. (Chuckles) Yeah, some had died, and some had just followed their children to Honolulu or to the Mainland. I guess they're all deceased now. Their descendants are living in Honolulu, and some in the Mainland. Some of them are doing very well in Honolulu.

WN: Why didn't your father move out of Paia?

VZ: He did well [in the business]. Enough to support his family and educate his children. And he had enough money to visit his home in China and back. He made three trips to China. The whole family made one trip to China during our school vacation, 1925. We hired somebody to look after things in the store (at that time). Yeah, we still had our customers. Our restaurant made good. We sold plenty of saimin that time. That's why, we wouldn't give up a good business like that to go elsewhere and take a chance in a new location. In 1925, on our way to China, we stopped at our granduncle's house in Honolulu. He suggested that we sell our place in Paia and move to Honolulu, and open a restaurant because we have no social life here [in Paia] anymore. Because there are hardly any Chinese.

Then, too, he said, "Your children will be intermarrying other nationalities." In the old days, the Chinese wanted (their daughters) to marry Chinese. They didn't want their daughters to marry other

nationalities. They were very strict with their daughters. But, of course, with the sons, they could marry any nationality they wanted and have as many wives as they wanted--I mean in China--as many wives as they wanted, but not the girls. They were to marry only one time and no more. And then, we had all this property. Three acres of land here, too--enough to keep us going. That's why we never moved away. My parents were considered successful in business. Of course, they said it's all right for the rest of us to go elsewhere, but they were not going to move elsewhere. In fact, one day, I think, right after the war, many people had moved away. They had gone to Kahului. They opened Kahului . . .

WN: Dream City?

VZ: . . . land in 1950? People were moving out. So, the old lady--Mrs. McGuffy, and my mother began talking one day. My mother came home and both of them said, ("We'll stay here for the rest of our lives.")

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: In 1931, you got married, yeah? Where did you live after you got married?

VZ: In Honolulu. For only a short while because I came back [to Maui], I think, was August of 1931. Because my husband was going to an air college in St. Louis. Von Hoffman Air College. So, I came back to my parents. I was already pregnant before he left, so I gave birth the following year--February 14, 1932 to twin girls. Then, after my husband graduated from the air college, he went to China and got a job with the liner there--airlines. My mother wouldn't let me go to China because the babies were young, very young. She didn't want us to risk our lives going to a place like that. So, we stayed back until 1934. July, 1934, my mother said, "If you want to go back now to be with your husband, you go. But don't take the girls."

So, I left my girls with my parents to look after. I went alone. Then, the following year, 1935, I gave birth to my oldest son in Hong Kong. My folks were forever asking me to come back, come back, come back, because the girls needed my care, and I was wasting my time there, because I wasn't working at all. There, you can hire servants very cheaply. I had four servants that I paid only two dollars each (per month). They worked about sixteen hours a day. It's just social life, over there. No work at all, so I was wasting my time there. Then, when I was pregnant with the last child, I came back to Hawaii. So, this last child was born in Paia.

WN: Nineteen thirty-six [1936], huh?

VZ: Nineteen thirty-six [1936]. Then, my husband never wanted to come

back this way. He remained there. Then came the war. I couldn't go back at all, yeah? After the war, he still didn't want to come back over this way. My mother didn't want me to go that way, and I was already teaching school. I had a good profession, I had to take care of my children, she said. I had to support my children and educate them. Time went on, and in 1949, he died in an air crash in the South China Sea. That's the end.

WN: So, you never saw him . . .

VZ: Ever since that.

WN: . . . after 1936?

VZ: Yeah. Never saw him again. Although we corresponded, that's all, but I never saw him again.

WN: Did he ever get to see your twin daughters, the first two born?

VZ: He had never seen them, because after he graduated from air college in the Mainland, he went directly from the Mainland to Shanghai.

WN: You said your mother wanted you to come back?

VZ: Yeah, she wanted me to come back. She said I was wasting my life over there. She's one person who believes in making the most of your life--make it useful. I was wasting my time there, because I did a lot of playing of mahjong and things like that--social life. Dancing and whatnot. And servants to take care of everything. I didn't do anything.

WN: If you had your own way, would you have stayed in China?

VZ: No, I don't think so. After a while, I'd be tired of that kind of life. I'm not used to that kind of life. I believe in working. (Laughs)

WN: When you started to have children, you took care of them in the house that you grew up in behind the store?

VZ: No, it's above the store. In 1949, we moved here. The house was built in 1949, so we moved here September, 1949. My daughters graduated high school in 1950 and left for the Mainland. So, that left only the two boys and me, and my oldest sister was not married then, and then, one brother who returned from the Mainland to be a schoolteacher. After he got married, he moved out. My older sister got married, and she moved out. So, that left only me and the two boys until they graduated high school. The first one joined the army. The second one went to the Mainland for school. There was a time for two years, there was nobody in this house except me. You know, I just worked hard over at the restaurant, helped with the restaurant, came back about 8 o'clock at night, did

my work--because I was a schoolteacher--my planning and preparation for school work. Next day, I went to work.

WN: So, when you started teaching in 1937, how did you manage working in the store and teaching? What was your day like?

VZ: Well, after school, I helped. Weekends, holidays, vacation. I don't know. I didn't feel anything, because I'm used to working. I guess I enjoy working. (Chuckles)

WN: What school did you teach at?

VZ: First at Keanae, then Paia, Haiku, Puunene--good many years. And then, Kahului, one year, and then Lihikai School [Kahului], the last ten years.

WN: So, while you were teaching, in the beginning part, your parents were still running the store?

VZ: At the time when I was teaching? Yeah. My parents were running the store. In 1950, my father gave the business to my youngest brother. Then after that, I always helped my brother instead of (my parents). But my mother was helping him, too. So, I was really helping my mother.

WN: When the war [World War II] came, was business very different?

VZ: Oh, yeah. Oh, the restaurant was busy--very, very busy. More than what we could handle. So, all of us chipped in and worked. You know, whenever we had free time, because all of us were working somewhere [else]. Like my oldest sister was working as a payroll clerk for the navy, stationed over here in Kahului--NAS [Naval Air Station], they called it. And then, I was teaching. Another sister was a circuit court clerk at Wailuku. My youngest sister was in the Mainland. And then, my sister-in-law--my brother's wife--was here, although my brother was working in Pearl Harbor as a electrical supervisor. She was here, so she helped. We all, the family, worked. We didn't hire any outsiders, because we managed to do the work. My father was old, but he could work.

WN: Because soldiers were coming into the restaurant, that's why it was busy?

VZ: Yeah, the servicemen. The servicemen came in (the restaurant). Well, as soon as the bus stopped here, they would (come in). They would just run off the bus and get into the restaurant and order their food. They would come, fill up the tables in no time. When we weren't home--you know, we were at work--my mother and my father did the work.

WN: One would watch the store, and one would watch the restaurant?

VZ: Yeah, but the restaurant was busy. The servicemen hardly bought

anything from the store, so they were over at the restaurant nearly all day long. Of course, sometimes people came in the store and took things. (Chuckles) Oh, they knew about it, but they let it go at that.

WN: In one day, during the war, you think, gross sales was about how much?

VZ: Why, I can't exactly tell you, but, considering the times, about $150 to $200 a day.

WN: Before the war, about how much?

VZ: Well, hard to say right just before the war, but small. Say, it would be about fifty dollars. But during the time when the Chinese people were here in great numbers--because things were cheap--was about that much. I would say, about fifty [dollars] a day. So, it [wartime business] was good.

WN: Were there any problems during the war? Any trouble?

VZ: Trouble with fights and things like that? No. We never had, because we didn't have a bar, that's why. So, there was no fight. The people who came to patronize us were good people, not the ones who got drunk. And then, we had many officers who came. They're good people. I mean, they're well behaved.

Once we had a nine-course dinner that my mother cooked in the evening for a Marine officer with Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Baldwin and other Marine officer. There were about ten of them. They enjoyed the Chinese dinner. My mother was an excellent cook. Once in a while, we had servicemen who would celebrate their birthdays. My mother would do the cooking. Well, the enlisted men came in the day, mostly; the officers, in the evening.

WN: Were the enlisted men allowed to come during the evening?

VZ: I think most of them were not allowed, except they had to have certain passes. When they had passes, they could go out. For instance, if they were going to a dance, they'd have special passes to go. But I did notice, though, mostly officers came in the evening, and then, enlisted men and officers during the day.

WN: During the war, were there a lot of restaurants like your folks' one?

VZ: We had three bars in town. Of course, only one remained. The other two were just [opened] for the war years. There were an additional three restaurants, but they closed after the servicemen left. So, they weren't here permanently, just for the war years. Because after the servicemen left after the war, they didn't get any business. Like us, we remained because we catered to all kinds of people.

WN: So, after the war was over, did you notice any change in your business?

VZ: Yeah, back to normal again. Just our island people who often patronized. But the restaurant was the business that really made good all the time.

WN: After the war was over, did you notice any changes in the wholesalers that you dealt with?

VZ: Well, the same, I think. They were the same until later on, there were some firms that closed. Like Maui Dry Goods, they closed. They no longer did any business. Then A&B Store didn't come to take orders anymore. After 1950, they opened in Kahului. Yeah, they still had the wholesale business, but we no longer ordered too many things because stores began opening in Kahului and people did most of their shopping there. So, [it was] just the restaurant that was running all the time--saimin and like that.

WN: So, when you noticed the store business declining, the restaurant business was still good?

VZ: Still good, still good. Even the people who went to Kahului to live always came back to eat.

(Laughter)

VZ: It began dropping when Maui Agricultural Company, the plantation here, merged with HC&S, Puunene [in 1948]. Then we no longer got the workers during the lunch hour. Many of the workers were scattered here and there. So, I guess, many of them carried their own lunches, or they bought lunches at Kahului. And then, many had moved down to live in Pukalani, in Kahului, some to Wailuku, and a few here and there. But most of the people, plantation people, had gone to Kahului. And the next place was Pukalani. Mrs. Alice Gouveia's [another interviewee] husband works for the plantation, and I think he still works for the plantation. He hasn't retired yet.

WN: You didn't notice any slowdown in the restaurant, then, you said. People still came to eat.

VZ: Yeah. But, you mean, today?

WN: Well, when people started moving to Kahului.

VZ: Yeah, gradually, the business became less and less. But we have new ones--the younger generation--they come in for saimin. Our business, a lot of it came from the Hana district. Whenever the Hana people go in and out from their district to this side, they always stop for food, especially saimin. Even today, too, it's mostly people from Hana district. Yeah, the local ones, too. People come and eat saimin. I know Saturdays and Sundays are still

busy, very busy. [We are] just open only a short while, but still, it's very busy. Was it busy when you were there today?

WN: Oh, had about four people eating. Right about 12:15 [o'clock p.m.].

VZ: Yeah, weekdays, that's why.

WN: When did you start to notice the store business really starting to decline?

VZ: After Kahului stores opened. Gradually, business at the store went down. And then the, well, lack of Chinese customers, too. So, we no longer sold Chinese groceries.

WN: What do you remember about that tidal wave that . . .

VZ: In 1946? It came on April Fool's Day, 1946. It was early in the morning. I think the first wave came at 6 o'clock in the morning. It wasn't extra big, but the ones who saw the peculiarities of the wave began shouting warning, "Something is wrong with the sea!" So, they all ran out from their homes.

I remember one family--a Chinese family of Wongs who lived where the present Rainbow Service Station is now, across the street--they got into their cars and just left before the second tidal wave--the biggest one--came and just broke their house and scattered their things all over the yard and on the road. But luckily, they were out. And many others, too. But there was one old man who lived close to the sea who died. The tidal wave washed him up to the fields over here across the street. He was an old man of eighty. The son is a plumber here. Shall I mention the name?

WN: Up to you.

VZ: Oh, Magarifuji. He still lives over there. You know, he had rebuilt his house. There's a two-story building there. Well, the wave went right through. The family members had already gone to their relatives in Wailuku to live. When they came back, they just repaired the house, that's all. [Today] you see a two-story building where they sell, I think, something about . . . . What's the name of that store, now? It's a new one.

WN: Oh, across the street [from Hew Store and Restaurant]?

VZ: Yeah, a two-story building next to the electrical substation. Something about Stone? (Oh, yes. The new store now is Touch Stone Gallery and Studio.)

WN: But your store, did the tidal wave affect it?

VZ: No, the fire did, but not the tidal wave. That's why I said, all

the homes and all the houses that were burnt to cinders escaped the tidal wave.

WN: Your parents retired in 1949, yeah?

VZ: Retired, yes. Uh huh. My father retired two years before he died. My mother retired five years before she died. But they lived to a ripe old age. (Laughs)

WN: Who did they pass the business on to after they retired?

VZ: My father passed it to my brother Patrick. After my brother Patrick died in 1975, he passed it to his wife, whom he married six years before. They have no children. So, I don't know. Maybe the business won't carry on after she goes, because they have no children.

WN: Your father. Could he have passed it on to you?

VZ: Well, he didn't pass it on to me, because I didn't ask for it. And then, too, I was teaching. My brother Patrick was the one who wasn't doing anything then. He was just discharged from the army. Some of his friends started to work in the post office for the federal government. They advised him to go on and get one too--a job like that. But he didn't want. He wanted to be in business. He wanted to take over my father's business, because my father made good. And he also made good. And his wife is making good.

The location is good, you know. The specialty is saimin. You see, that's why. It's good saimin, that's why you get customers for that. To make a go at it. Besides that, she has a federal pension. She was working as a office girl at Tripler Hospital. She worked there for twenty-eight years before she retired two years before my brother died. So, she was hardly here [Paia]. Only in the last two years before he died, then she was here. So, she doesn't know much about the business. Besides that, she has no children, so she's not ambitious. So, she just opens the business for a short time [during the day] only. After she goes, I guess she'll pass it on to her family. She came from Honolulu. So, I don't think she'll pass it back to the Hews. So, the Hews lost out. (Laughs) The business and some estate, too, that belonged to my brother--my brother's share. My brother left quite a bit for her.

WN: You were born in Paia, and you grew up there, and you worked there. What are your thoughts and feelings as you look back today as to the future of Paia?

VZ: Yeah, I think I'll live the rest of my life in Paia. I have my state pension and social security to look after me. We have a Chinese cemetery where I can be buried free, because in the early days, there was a Chinese club (that bought it). The Chinese club had put up the money and bought ten acres of land where the present Chinese cemetery is now for the purpose of burying Chinese people

and their dependents and descendants. For instance, my (youngest) son can be buried there and his wife. Even though she's from Korea, she can be buried there. Like my other son, he'll most likely be buried in the veteran's cemetery because he's a retired serviceman, and his wife will be there, too. But the rest of us will be buried in the Chinese cemetery. But the other brothers and sisters, they don't live here. They live away in the Mainland, Honolulu, and Kahului. Most likely, the one in Kahului will be buried in Wailuku, I think.

WN: Well, do you have any more last thoughts?

VZ: Anything more to say? You have to ask me questions, if you have anything in mind.

WN: Any last thing before . . .

VZ: You have covered practically everything.

WN: So, now, I'm just leaving it up to you if you want to say anything.

VZ: Well, I don't think I have very much more to say, except, recently, I noticed, the last five years, lots of Mainlanders here. Actually, the Mainlanders' cash has revitalized the business in Lower Paia. If it weren't for them, Paia Town would be a ghost town. If you walk up the street and down, you'll find that many businesses now are run by Caucasians from the Mainland. Have you noticed that?

So, the changes--originally, Hawaiians used to live here. Then, Chinese with some Japanese and a few Koreans. After most of the Chinese left, the Japanese took their places. Then, some Filipinos came in. Today, it's the Caucasians. Just a few Oriental stores are left, now. We have Horiuchi Market, Nagata, Economy--I mean, by local people--and Bersamin Market. Of course, we have the service stations--Smile Service Station, Paia Service Station. On Baldwin Avenue, there's another one.

WN: Kagehiro?

VZ: Uh huh [yes]. Like restaurants over here, I guess the Hew Restaurant and Larry's, and the Picnic, now. It changed hands many times. Was M&R, and some other people had it. That was the former Machida Drugstore. The barbers, too. The Nakamura Barbershop and Kadosaki Barbershop are not in existence. They have retired. At Nakamura's place, a Caucasian is running a barbershop there. I guess you have noticed that as you walk up and down the streets, yeah? Then you have the pool hall run by Augie. And the Rainbow Service Station run by islanders. They changed hands several times. The Union Service Station up there is run by islanders, I think, of Portuguese descent or a mixture.

WN: So, lot of changes.

VZ: Anything more you want?

WN: No, I think that's it.

VZ: Oh, yeah. Of course, you haven't heard of the Kobayashi family, or have you contacted them?

WN: Yeah, I have. So, thank you very much, Mrs. Zane.

VZ: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

STORES and STOREKEEPERS of Paia & Puunene, Maui

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa

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